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Effects of the Remind App on Parent-Teacher Communication at a Mixed-Income
Middle School

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Date _____

Abstract

The purpose of conducting this research project was to gain insight on using text messaging as an effective communication tool with parents/guardians through the use of the Remind Application. The intervention took place over a four week period at a public school in North Dakota. Two hundred and seventy seventh grade students and one hundred and sixty-three parents/guardians participated in this study. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected via a pre and post parent/guardian survey, student presurvey, weekly Remind Application messages, and a teacher reflection journal.

Analysis of the data revealed easy and convenient messages resulted in a higher response rate from parents/guardians. Further research can be done by continuing with the Remind Application throughout the school year and trying various formats and messages to gain a higher participation rate from parents/guardians.

Keywords: communication, text messaging, engagement, involvement

Through observation of various tools currently used between parents/guardians and teachers, it is apparent that there is a need for an easy and convenient way to effectively achieve communication in a school setting. Our goal was to study the impacts, if any, text messaging parents/guardians in a mixed-income middle school setting would have on parent-teacher communication. Success is built through communication; without it, support systems are lost or depleted. Parent-teacher communication is essential in the process of building stronger relationships between teachers and parents/guardians and achieving a higher level of academic success. Communication is a vital discipline in multiple aspects of people's everyday lives and it is not different for education. Multiple twenty-first century tools have given opportunities to make these relationships more obtainable, time effective, and user friendly to all.

To obtain a stronger level of student success parents/guardians need to be more actively involved in their child's academic endeavors. When teachers and families collaborate to support student learning, parent engagement in their child's academic success may increase (Baker, 2014). The relationship between parents/guardians and teachers must be open ended and free of barriers. When parents/guardians are accurately informed about their child's education in an established professional relationship they become better positioned to be actively involved in their child's academics.

Little is known about how text messaging can improve and enhance communication practices between parents/guardians and teachers. Consequently, there is a need to gather and present information to parents/guardians about the usefulness of text messaging as a form of parent-teacher communication in the twenty-first century. Therefore, the purpose of this action research study is to determine how effective

communication with parents/guardians in a mixed-income middle school setting can be beneficial through the implementation of the Remind Application.

The location of this study takes place in a public middle school in North Dakota. The primary participants were the parents/guardians of students during the 2017-18 school year. Students also participated in a small degree at the start of the study. The data tools developed were designed to discover the attitudes, responses, and convenience of communication between parents/guardians and teachers in a school setting. The data tools consisted of pre and post parent surveys, pre student surveys, weekly Remind Application messages and a teacher reflection journal.

Review of Literature

Differing viewpoints on successful communication between parents/guardians and teachers can either strengthen or hinder student's academic success. When teachers and families collaborate to support student learning, parent engagement in their child's academic success may increase (Baker, 2014). Parent engagement includes intentional efforts made by the teacher to communicate with parents/guardians on strategies to improve academic success (Baker, Wise, Kelley, & Skiba, 2016). Strategies may include introductory letters, newsletters, school to home notebooks, or report cards as a one way written communication tool (Graham-Clay, 2005). Graham-Clay (2005) collected two way communication strategies to be used in the classroom which may include telephone calls, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, or school based community activities. The key is to find what form of communication works best for both the teacher and parent/guardian, which usually involves a quick phone call, text, or email, and establish that form of communication early to form a trusting relationship (Powers,

2016). Establishing a communication tool allows parents/guardians to view a glimpse of their child's life at school (Meacham, 2016). Increased parent/guardian involvement may result in the improvement of student achievement (Bennett-Conroy, 2012).

To achieve student academic success through communication methods, our research concludes it is essential to understand (a) parent/guardian perspectives, (b) teacher viewpoints, and (c) involvement strategies between parents/guardians and teachers. The purpose of this paper is to review literature written about parent-teacher communication strategies.

Parent/Guardian Perspectives on Communication

Opportunities for parents/guardians to be involved in their child's education are viewed as the responsibility of the school (Baker et al., 2016). Schools could implement an "open door" policy where parents/guardians and teachers form an academic community (Halsey, 2005). An "open door" policy is where parents/guardians are provided chances to participate in volunteer opportunities and viewing student projects and performances. This academic community would allow parents/guardians to share the educational responsibilities with their child's teachers (Azcoitia, 2010). When parents/guardians feel involved, they are more likely to be invested in their child's education. Teachers have the chance to involve parents/guardians in their child's education outside of school hours. Parent/Guardian assistance on homework may model collaboration and participation through their child's academic journey (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

There is an issue of barriers formed due to lack of meaningful parent-teacher communication. Some parents/guardians feel they are not welcome in their child's school

and that their child's education should be left to the experts, such as teachers and administration (Symeou, Roussounidou, & Michaelides, 2012). A lack of communication from teachers may create a barrier between parents/guardians and teachers. Many parents/guardians may feel their role in their child's education is limited and therefore feel unconnected to the school and their child's academic path (Ferrara, 2009). As Berger and Riojas-Cortez (2012) stated, the connection between parents/guardians and teachers must be open ended, especially for students to see the active role both are taking in their education.

Parental factors may influence a lack of connection between parents/guardians and teachers which include but are not limited to 1) economic pressures, 2) time constraints, 3) overlapping schedules, 4) cultural barriers, and 5) pre-existing negative experiences or feelings about school (Graham-Clay, 2005). Teacher perspectives may be influenced by these varied parental factors. Unfortunately, when there is a lack of parent/guardian involvement, it may hinder students from reaching their full academic potential (Patel & Stevens, 2010). Teacher misconceptions can view parents/guardians as unwilling participants in their child's education. As educators, necessary information needs to be provided to parents/guardians in order for them to properly support their child's education at home (DiJohn, 2015).

Teacher Viewpoints: Barriers and Recommendations

Several teacher components have been shown to contribute to a decline in parental involvement in schools including limited preservice/in-service training, shortage of time, and overloaded schedules (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). A lack of parental involvement can be largely blamed on the failure of preservice programs to sufficiently

train teachers to work with families (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). Assumptions can be made by school districts that teachers should knowingly communicate with parents/guardians. Preservice and inservice training related to parent-teacher communication are not always readily available, which may lead to a lack of confidence in teachers. It is critical that strong communication is established between parents/guardians and teachers in a timely manner to promote academic success for the student early in their education (Baker et al., 2016). Unfortunately, some teachers lack time throughout their day to address each individual parent/guardian on student needs. Teachers also have to meet the demanding needs of parent/guardian work schedules along with school extracurricular activities (Graham-Clay, 2005).

Recommendations have been proposed to teachers concerning a need to (a) increase parent/guardian involvement, (b) improve parent-teacher communication, and (c) improve new skills for parent-teacher communication (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). Research compiled by Flynn and Nolan (2008) suggests the following strategies: involving parents/guardians in classroom activities, inviting parents/guardians on field trips, supporting extracurricular activities, and conducting educational workshops. Parents/Guardians may receive significant information at educational workshops on topics such as literacy, technology, or furthering their child's education through collaboration strategies (Flynn & Nolan, 2008).

Research conducted by McNaughton, Hamlin, McCarthy, Head-Reeves, and Schreiner (2008) state that the key to communication is effective collaboration and cooperative relationships between families and teachers. Teachers can be instructed on positive means of communication through the use of counseling skills, such as nonverbal

communication, questioning, paraphrasing, reflection, and summarizing (Symeou et al., 2012). Counseling skills can positively influence meaningful parent-teacher relationships.

Moving from Involvement to Engagement with Parent-Teacher Communication

Parents/Guardians and family members may (a) desire frequent communication from teachers, (b) want teachers to be open and truthful without “sugar coating” negative information, (c) expect teachers to present positives along with the negatives, and (d) appreciate teachers who effectively convey private and sensitive information (Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, Hartman, & Kemp, 2010). Teachers are encouraged to use the techniques described to communicate effectively during face to face meetings, over the phone, or through digital platforms. Establishing positive relationships can be the foundation for effective communication exchanges between parents/guardians and teachers. Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, Hartman, and Kemp (2010) researched successful communication as being tactful, forthright, clear, constant, positive, and being a good listener. Communication delivered in such a manner indicates the willingness to collaborate and form purposeful relationships with families.

Teachers should implement a variety of formats through communication that can actively begin personable correspondence between themselves and parents/guardians (Halsey, 2005). Traditional one way communication is one of the most effective forms of correspondence and usually involves written communication such as introductory letters, newsletters, school to home notebooks, or report cards as researched by Graham-Clay (2005). Graham-Clay (2005) also discusses the importance of two way communication where interactive dialogue between parents/guardians and teachers is present. This type

of communication could be in the form of telephone calls, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, or school based community activities (Graham-Clay, 2005).

Emerging technologies facilitate concrete parent-teacher communication and parent/guardian involvement (Olmstead, 2013). Olmstead (2013) collected data through parent/guardian surveys to analyze the relationship between parent/guardian and teacher perceptions of student achievement when electronic communications are used. Blogs, wikis, and email can provide parents/guardians with two way communication when they need to pull information or respond to a prompt (Olmstead, 2013). The study revealed that parents/guardians and teachers place a high value on proactive parent/guardian involvement. Technology allows opportunities for parents/guardians to remain involved in their children's academics without being physically present or altering their time sensitive schedules (Olmstead, 2013). Thus, teachers and school districts should be seeking ways to maximize emerging technologies to remain at the forefront of communication.

Integrating technology as a source of communication broadens the ability to communicate effectively and timely with parents/guardians beyond traditional formats (Graham-Clay, 2005). Some examples teachers may bring into the classroom include classroom phones and voicemail, videos, school websites, and online assignments or projects (Graham-Clay, 2005). As more accessible resources are available, the greater the likelihood that parents/guardians will take initiative to achieve an ongoing communicative relationship with teachers. As Graham-Clay (2005) describes, parents/guardians would also be able to access student learning plans or goals and work

with the teacher to achieve individual progress and success for their child. Ultimately, it's up to the teachers to create this online learning environment.

Technology as a means of communication involves positive opportunities as well as risks and challenges (Palts & Kalmus, 2015). Using digital channels can enable fast, frequent, and effective interactions between parents/guardians and teachers (Palts & Kalmus, 2015). However, Palts and Kalmus (2015) state the negative effects of online communication as a lack of personal interactions with families. Using digital platforms as the only form of communication can diminish a collaborative interpersonal relationship.

Conclusion

The literature review states the importance of parent/guardian engagement to foster academic success for the student. Parent/Guardian involvement and the need for ongoing parent-teacher communication is beyond dispute (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). By implementing the proposed recommendations, such as inviting parents/guardians to be involved in school activities, establishing an online digital connection, and training teachers in collaborative parent-teacher strategies, an alliance between parents/guardians and teachers will be created (Flynn & Nolan, 2008).

Parent/Guardian perspectives, teacher viewpoints, and involvement strategies between parents/guardians and teachers should be effectively initiated to build a stable learning environment for the student. Established relationships between parents/guardians and teachers demonstrate the importance of education to children. A variety of digital tools can be utilized by teachers to communicate effectively with parents/guardians.

Methodology

This study used an experimental design to improve the communication between parents/guardians and teachers in a middle-income middle school. Pre and post surveys stated open ended questions designed to gather students and parents/guardians viewpoints on communication within a school system. Open ended questions were asked through weekly text messages by using the Remind Application.

The population for this action research was seventh grade students and their parent/guardians who signed up for the Remind Application. The sample includes ninety-four parents/adults from seventh grade life science and sixty-nine parents/adults signed from seventh grade global studies. Downloading the Remind Application was not mandatory, but voluntary for all parents/guardians.

Pre and post survey responses were gathered to provide information on previous tools and means of communication between teachers and parents/guardians. Surveys asked what forms of communication are the most time efficient and easily accessible to them and how often they would like to hear from their child's teacher.

The teachers emailed a pre survey to parents/guardians and had students complete a pre survey in class. The pre survey consisted of open ended questions that focused on parent-teacher communication. Teachers also emailed a form to voluntarily sign up for the Remind Application for classroom updates and announcements. Through the use of the Remind Application teachers also asked parents/guardians specific questions with various forms of responses ranging from Y/N, OK, a 1-5 scale, or often/some/none. The text message was sent to parents/guardians that chose to sign up for the Remind Application. A weekly journal log was kept by the teachers to record what message was sent, the amount of time spent each week creating the message, and the response rate

from parents/guardians. The researcher then analyzed what messages received the highest response rates and how quickly responses were received. The researcher also reviewed student and parent pre and post surveys to identify themes or trends in the responses.

Analysis of Data

Data Source #1 Google Form Parent/Guardian and Student Surveys

Google Form was utilized as a data resource at the beginning and end of our action research to survey parents/guardians and students. Parents/Guardians were emailed a pre survey to complete prior to participating in our study. Parents/Guardians were asked a series of questions pertaining to the types of communication tools used by teachers in the past and their feelings about communication with teachers. A total of ninety-seven parents/guardians participated in the pre survey between our life science and global studies classes. *Figure 1* displays the comfort level of using a text messaging application as a set classroom communication tool with teachers. Eighty-four of the ninety-seven participants responded that they would use a text messaging system to communicate with teachers. One parent/guardian responded that they would not feel comfortable using a text messaging system.

The parents/guardians had an opportunity to answer an open ended question about their feelings towards using a text messaging system in their child's school. Eighty-five out of the ninety-seven parents/guardians replied that they would feel comfortable using text messages. The remainder of the responses stated concerns about the information that would be sent and the frequency of communication. When parents/guardians were asked the easiest form of communication with their child's teacher, fifty-nine parents/guardians

felt that text messaging would be the easiest form of communication. The remainder of responses varied from emails, face to face contact, or phone calls.

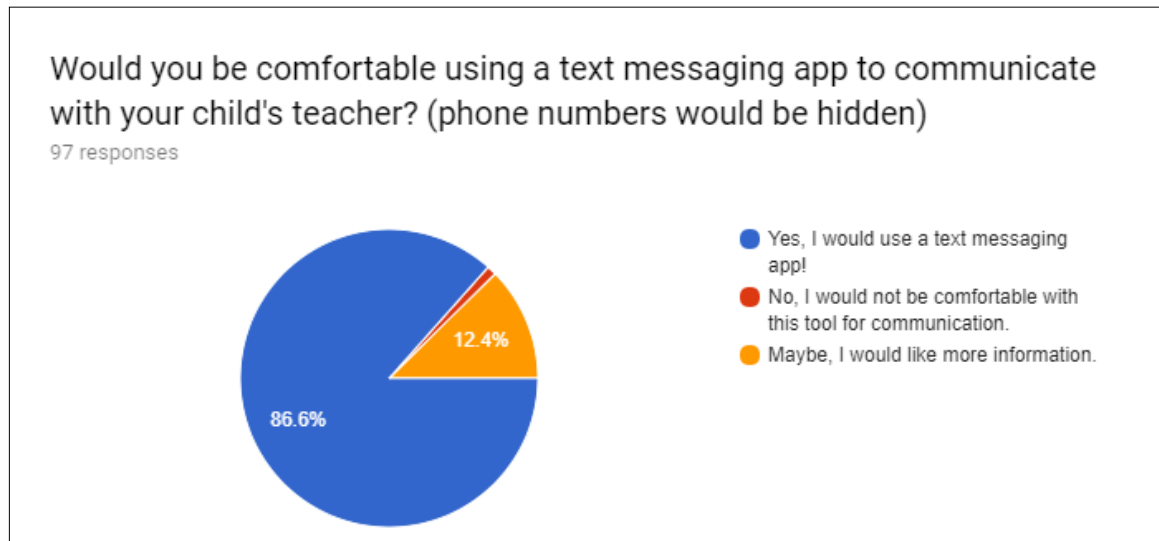


Figure 1. Parent/Guardian comfort level with text messaging as a communication tool.

Students in our life science and global studies classes participated in a Google Form pre survey. The survey asked questions pertaining to communication practices used by teachers in the past and how they felt text messaging could benefit their education. Two hundred and fourteen students felt that text messaging would give them the opportunity to ask questions on homework, one hundred and eighty-nine students would use it to clarify project directions, and one hundred and fifty-three students would like to receive classroom announcements and updates. Thirty-two students responded that they would not benefit from using a text messaging application as a set communication tool.

Parents/Guardians were emailed a post survey to review the effectiveness of Remind Application as a classroom communication tool. We were surprised to only receive twenty-eight responses to our post survey. However, life science continues to have ninety-seven participants and global studies has seventy-six participants on the

Remind Application. *Figure 2* displays how parents/guardians feel text messaging benefited communication. Twenty-one of the twenty-eight parents/guardians felt that updates and reminders were most beneficial. Classroom announcements were the second highest choice with five parents/guardians.

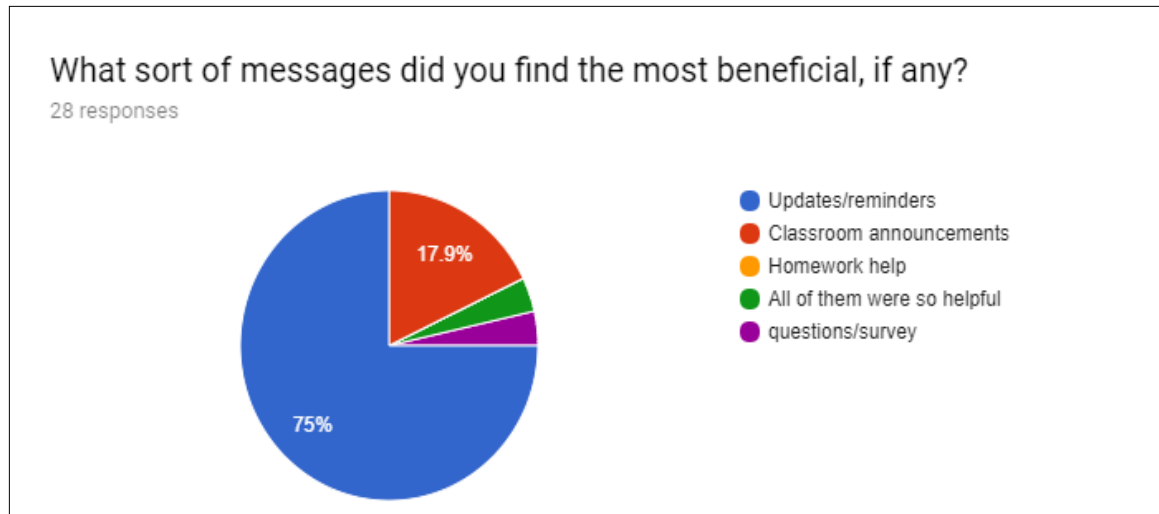


Figure 2. Parent/Guardian benefits of using the remind application.

Data Source #2 Remind Application Response Rates

The focus of our study dealt with the effectiveness of communicating through the use of the Remind Application with parents/guardians. Parents/Guardians were asked to respond to specific questions in various forms ranging from Y/N, OK, 1-5 scale, or often/some/none. Response rates were gathered weekly to view the number of parents/guardians responding out of the total signed up. Data was analyzed to decipher which messages received higher response rates. *Figure 3* and *Figure 4* display life science and global studies course totals and response rates. Global studies received higher response rates two out of the four weeks of the study. We agreed that messages sent with the simplest form of a reply resulted in a higher number of response rates from

parents/guardians. Week two was the highest performing week for both classes with the most responses from parents/guardians. The response prompt for week two asked parents/guardians to respond by sending “OK”. Life science received forty-one out of ninety-four parents/guardians responses. Global studies received fifty out of sixty-five parents/guardians responses. We believe parents/guardians were able to respond faster to short and concise prompts. Week three resulted in the worst response rates for both life science and global studies as we prompted parents/guardians to respond to a scale response of 1-5. Life science had ten out of ninety-four parents/guardians respond and global studies had fourteen out of sixty-six parents/guardians respond. The scale prompt required thought and reflection from parents/guardians to respond. We believe parents/guardians are willing to respond with a precise response rather than generating their own response.

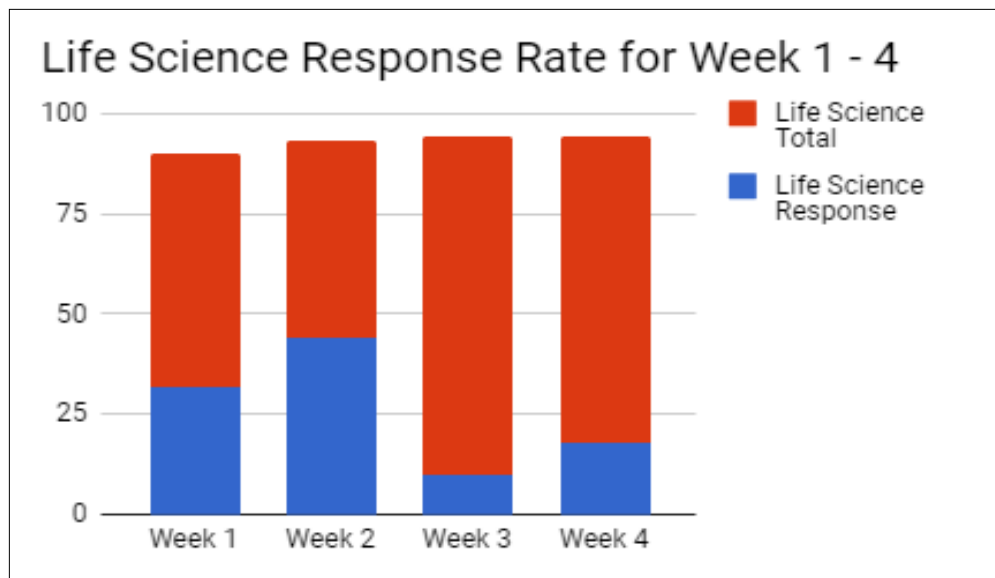


Figure 3. Life science parent/guardian response rate and total.

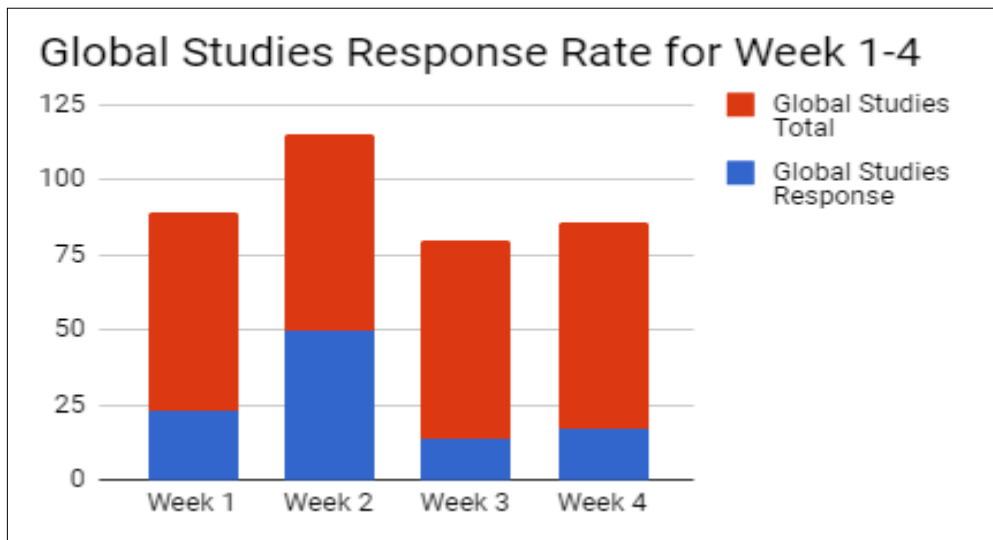


Figure 4. Global studies parent/guardian response rate and total.

Data Source #3 Weekly Reflection Journal

Our third data collection tool was a weekly reflection journal to track the effectiveness of each text message prompt sent. *Table 1* displays each weekly message, prompt, time taken to form message, and the feedback rate of the message sent. Week two resulted in the highest response rate for life science. Parents/Guardians responded well to the short reply of “OK”. Week three and week four resulted in the lowest response rates. Parents/Guardians had to reflect on the question rather than respond with a simple reply. On average, text messages took five minutes to create and send to parents/guardians.

Table 1

Life Science Weekly Journal

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<u>Method</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>	<u>OK</u>	<u>1-5</u>	<u>Often, Some, None</u>
Reflection	32 parents out of 89 responded to	41 parents out of 93 responded to	10 parents out of 94 responded to	18 parents out of 94

	the announcement. 18 parents replied “yes” that their child talked about the labs.	the announcement. I was very pleased with the fast rate of replies. 41 parents replied within 24 hours. This approach was effective.	the announcement. I was not sure how the question this week would be received by parents. This was an ineffective approach.	responded to the text. The question related to studying at home. This form of questioning can be effective with having parents remind students to study at home.
Time	10 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
Message	Hello! Life Science investigated a 3-hole bottle & Gummy Bear lab this week. Please reply Yes/No if your child talked about the labs!	Hello! Life Science has a summative assessment Mon/Tues on the scientific method. Please reply “OK” if you received this message.	Hello! On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being never and 5 being often, how frequently does your child talk about science? Please reply with a number 1-5.	Hello! Unit 2 Quizlet should be studied at home. Please reply often, some, or none for the amount of time studying at home takes place.

Note. The highest response rate is boldface.

The third data collection tool was weekly journals to track response rates from parents/guardians based on the formatting and ease of each individual message. *Table 2* displays each weekly message, prompt, time taken to form the message, and effectiveness of each message sent. The quick “Y/N” and “OK” options generated the highest number of responses. The more detailed question prompts, as asked in weeks three and four, generated the lowest response rates. The planning to generate messages was very time efficient, averaging around five minutes a week. If parents/guardians chose not to respond they still received the message that was sent from the classroom for the week.

Table 2

Global Studies Weekly Journal

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<u>Method</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>	<u>OK</u>	<u>1-5</u>	<u>Often, Some, None</u>
Reflection	23 parents responded to my message. 8 parents replied Yes to their child discussing map skills at home with them. 6 responded No and they would ask their child about it at home.	I was very happy with my response rate. Many parents responded within the first few hours after the message was sent.	This approach was not well received from parents as only 14 responded. Parents that did respond gave mostly 4-5 responses.	Only 17 parents responded to this week's post. This question was related to homework and how much time is spent on school work outside of the classroom.
Time	10 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
Message	Hello! Global Studies started map skills by reading latitude and longitude. Please reply Yes/No if your child has discussed this with you!	Hello! Global Studies will be finishing map skills Mon/Tues next week. Please reply "OK" if you received this message.	Hello! On a scale from 1-5, with 1 being never and 5 being often, how frequently does your child talk about global studies? Please reply 1-5.	Hello! Map Skills should be reviewed at home. Please reply often, some, or none for the amount of time studying at home takes place.

Note. The highest response rate is boldface.

Action Plan

The results of our research study support the idea that when teachers and parents/guardians use a tool such as the Remind Application, communication increases between both parties. Parents/Guardians not only feel more connected with their child's education but with the school setting and events as well (Baker, 2014). While newsletters, email, and handwritten letters are great examples of one way communication,

parents/guardians in the twenty-first century enjoy the ease and convenience of technology to communicate with their child's teachers. The Remind Application proved to be an effective twenty-first century tool as it is a time saving and convenient form of text messaging, which a majority of people are familiar and comfortable using in their everyday lives.

Parents/Guardians acknowledged they liked the quick responses and messages from the teachers that the Remind Application provided along with the announcements and reminders. They also appreciated how easy the Remind Application was to set up and that it's a free service. This communication tool also allowed teachers to keep parents/guardians informed on events and topics covered in the classroom.

When weekly updates and reminders were sent to parents/guardians they also observed, through the given communication tool, that we were invested in their child's education and wanted to take more initiative to work as a team. Parents/Guardians also discussed topics going on in the classroom with their child, which in turn will have positive effects to the individual student. When students see their parents/guardians are well informed on their academics, stronger communication skills are built at home as well (Baker et al., 2016).

We both found the Remind Application to be user friendly. The first week took a little longer, as we were figuring out all the tools through the Remind Application, but we caught on fast throughout the following weeks. Once a message was sent responses came back within thirty seconds which continued our confidence with the communication tool. We spent less than five minutes a week drafting a message and sending to all parents/guardians in our classes.

There were areas for improvement through the use of the Remind Application. For example, there is a limited number of characters on each message sent out through the Remind Application so longer announcements would have to be divided into two separate messages. This tends to be frustrating and confusing to both the sender and receiver. Next, multiple parents/guardians were under the assumption that their comment would be seen by the whole group and not just the teacher. This is something we would want to address to parents/guardians in the future so they feel more comfortable with the Remind Application which has a potential effect in a higher number of participants using the text messaging system.

We will both continue to use the Remind Application through a series of reminders, announcements, and updates in our classrooms. If parents/guardians are not comfortable with the Remind Application we plan to reach out to them in other ways, such as email or phone calls, to keep the communication open. We don't foresee the use of the Remind Application being an issue as many parents/guardians gave positive feedback on how well they like the communication tool and that they would continue to use it as a primary communication method with their child's teachers.

We also plan to continue our research on discovering new ways to utilize the Remind Application, such as creating smaller groups within our own classes. We have discussed creating a group for our homebase students for specific reminders such as fees due or activities the school is hosting. We want to leave communication two way so parents/guardians feel comfortable discussing subjects freely with us and ask questions or bring up concerns if they arise.

As we continue to feel more confident in our own use with the Remind Application we will share our experiences and outcomes with our coworkers and team members. Coworkers that we discussed our data with have shown interest with adding the Remind Application to their own communication systems. Currently, our school uses email as its main source of communication with parents/guardians. It would be interesting to see all grade levels and subjects using the Remind Application and how it improves the communication between our teachers and parents/guardians as a whole school.

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Appendix A



Sign up for important updates from Miss Opp and Mrs. Nisbet.

Get information for Simle Middle School right on your phone—not on handouts.


Pick a way to receive messages for Life Science:

A If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

rmd.at/d4k74e

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.


A smartphone screen displaying the Remind sign-up page. The URL "rmd.at/d4k74e" is at the top. Below it is the heading "Join Life Science". There are two input fields: "Full Name" with the placeholder "First and Last Name", and "Phone Number or Email Address" with the placeholder "(555) 555-5555".

B If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message @d4k74e to the number 81010.

If you're having trouble with 81010, try texting @d4k74e to (530) 387-4655.

* Standard text message rates apply.

A smartphone screen displaying the text message sign-up page. The "To" field contains the number "81010". The "Message" field contains the text "@d4k74e".

Don't have a mobile phone? Go to rmd.at/d4k74e on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.

Appendix B



Sign up for important updates from Miss Opp and Mrs. Nisbet.

Get information for Simle Middle School right on your phone—not on handouts.

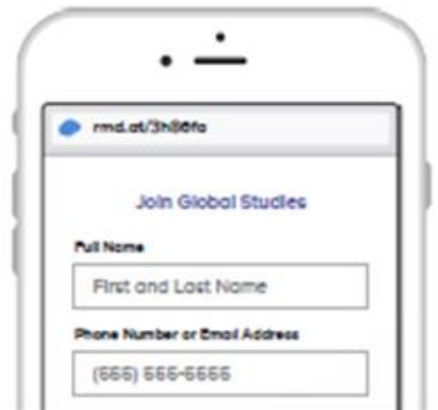
Pick a way to receive messages for Global Studies:

- A** If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

rmd.at/3h86fa

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.



- B** If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message @3h86fa to the number 81010.

If you're having trouble with 81010, try texting @3h86fa to (240) 839-6270.

* Standard text message rates apply.



Don't have a mobile phone? Go to rmd.at/3h86fa on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.

Appendix C

Pre-Survey - Remind App (parent)

Complete a short survey on communication tools in the classroom. If you participate in this pre-survey your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. Information gathered from this survey will be used in an action research project through the St. Catherine's University.

* Required

1. How often have you been contacted by your child's teacher in previous years? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Once a semester

2. In the past, what sort of messages from your child's teacher did you find to be the most useful to you or your child? *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Classroom announcements/reminders
- ☐ Extra help on assignments or projects
- ☐ Due dates/upcoming assessment reminders
- ☐ Other: _____

3. Do you think it would enhance your child's learning to have a set classroom communication tool with their teacher? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, I feel it would enhance their learning!
- ☐ No, a set communication tool isn't necessary.
- ☐ Maybe, depending on how easy the communication tool is!

4. Would you be comfortable using a text messaging app to communicate with your child's teacher? (phone numbers would be hidden) *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, I would use a text messaging app!
- ☐ No, I would not be comfortable with this tool for communication.
- ☐ Maybe, I would like more information.

5. Do you have access to a cell phone or other device that would allow you to successfully receive or send text messages? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, I have access.
- ☐ No, I do not have access.
- ☐ I sometimes have access.
- ☐ Other: _____

6. How would you use the text messaging app to communicate with your child's teacher? *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Ask questions on homework.
- ☐ Clarify directions on a project.
- ☐ State concerns from class.
- ☐ Stay updated with events/announcements from the classroom.
- ☐ Other: _____

7. Do you feel a text messaging system in your child's school would help you feel more connected to what is happening in the classroom? *

8. Do you feel communication with teachers has been positive for you and your child in the past? *

9. What do you feel is the easiest form of communication with your child's teachers? *

10. How often would you use the text messaging tool to effectively communicate with your child's teacher? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Rarely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Regularly

11. What are some ways you would like to be included in our classroom or school activities? *

12. What else would you like me to know about your family's communication needs? *

Appendix D

Pre-Survey - Remind App (students)

Complete a short survey on communication tools in the classroom. If you participate in this pre-survey your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential.

* Required

1. What type of tool do you prefer to communicate with your teacher? Check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Phone Call
- ☐ Google Classroom
- ☐ Text Message (Remind App)

2. Do you think it would enhance your learning to have a set classroom communication tool with your teacher? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, I feel it would enhance my learning!
- ☐ No, I wouldn't use the communication tool.
- ☐ Maybe, depending on how easy the communication tool is!

3. Aside from when we talk to each other in the classroom, how helpful do you think it would be to receive reminders from me about school assignments, homework, or things to remember via text? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ Somewhat helpful
- ☐ Not very helpful

4. Would you be comfortable using a text messaging app to communicate with your teacher? (phone numbers would be hidden) *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes, I would use a text messaging app!
- ☐ No, I would not be comfortable with this tool for communication.

5. How would you use the text messaging app to communicate with your teacher? Check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Ask questions on homework.
- ☐ Clarify directions on a project.
- ☐ State concerns from class.
- ☐ Classroom events/announcements.
- ☐ I would not be comfortable with this tool for communication.
- ☐ Other: _____

6. How do you feel communication has been in the past with your teachers? Explain positive or negative experiences. *

7. Do you feel teachers text messaging your parents would benefit your education. If yes, how so? *

8. What concerns would you have about using the Remind App, if any? *

Appendix E

Post-Survey - Remind App (parent)

Complete a short survey on communication tools in the classroom. If you participate in this post-survey your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. Information gathered from this survey will be used in an action research project through the St. Catherine's University.

* Required

1. Over the past 4 weeks while using the Remind App how many messages do you remember seeing, if any? *

2. What sort of messages did you find the most beneficial, if any? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Updates/reminders
☐ Classroom announcements
☐ Homework help
☐ Other: _____

3. Are you comfortable using a text messaging app to communicate with your child's teacher? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes!
☐ No.

4. How did you use the text messaging app to communicate with your child's teacher? *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Ask questions on homework.
☐ Clarify directions on a project.
☐ State concerns from class.
☐ Stay updated with events/announcements from the classroom.
☐ Other: _____

5. Do you feel a text messaging system in your child's school helped you feel more connected to what occurred in the classroom? *

6. What do you feel is the easiest form of communication with your child's teachers? *

7. How often did you use the text messaging tool to effectively communicate with your child's teacher? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Rarely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Regularly

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, would you continue using the Remind app to communicate with you child's teacher? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Frequently

9. What else should I know? Or what other sorts of information would you like to see? *

Appendix F

**Effectiveness of Text Messaging on Parent/Guardian Communication
Parental Permission Form**

8/24/17

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In addition to being your child's life science teacher, I am a St. Catherine University student pursuing a Masters of Education. As a capstone to my program, I need to complete an Action Research project. I am going to study effective parent/guardian communication using the Remind app because I would like to improve parent-teacher communication.

In the coming weeks, I will be sending weekly messages through the Remind app as a regular part of my weekly updates/announcements. All students will participate as members of the class. In order to understand the outcomes, I plan to analyze the data obtained from the results of this using the Remind app to determine if it is an effective and time saving communication tool. Data includes total response rate and information gathered through survey questions. All strategies implemented and assessments given are part of normal educational practice.

The purpose of this letter is to notify you of this research and to allow you the opportunity to exclude your child's participation from my study.

If you decide you want your child's data to be in my study, you don't need to do anything at this point.

If you decide you do NOT want your child's data included in my study, please note that on this form below and return it by **9/22/17**. Note that your child will still participate in daily lessons but his/her data will not be included in my analysis.

In order to help you make an informed decision, please note the following:

- I am working with a faculty member at St. Kate's and an advisor to complete this particular project.
- I hope to implement a time saving communication tool between parents/guardians and teachers.
- I will be writing about the results that I get from this research. However, none of the writing that I do will include the name of this school, the names of any students, or any references that would make it possible to identify outcomes connected to a particular student. Other people will not know if your child is in my study.

- The final report of my study will be electronically available online at the St. Catherine University library. The goal of sharing my research study is to help other teachers who are also trying to improve their teaching.
- There is no penalty for not having your child's data involved in the study, I will simply delete his or her responses from my data set.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Allison Opp, allison_opp@bismarckschools.org. You may ask questions now, or if you have any questions later, you can ask me, or my advisor Mary Hedenstrom, mnhedenstrom@stkate.edu, who will be happy to answer them. If you have questions or concerns regarding the study, and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Allison Opp

Date

OPT OUT: Parents/Guardians, in order to exclude your child's data from the study, please sign and return by 9/22/17.

I do NOT want my child's data to be included in this study from the given number.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Cell Phone Number

Appendix G

**Effectiveness of Text Messaging on Parent/Guardian Communication
Parental Permission Form**

8/24/17

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In addition to being your child's global studies teacher, I am a St. Catherine University student pursuing a Masters of Education. As a capstone to my program, I need to complete an Action Research project. I am going to study effective parent/guardian communication using the Remind app because I would like to improve parent-teacher communication.

In the coming weeks, I will be sending weekly messages through the Remind app as a regular part of my weekly updates/announcements. All students will participate as members of the class. In order to understand the outcomes, I plan to analyze the data obtained from the results of this using the Remind app to determine if it is an effective and time saving communication tool. Data includes total response rate and information gathered through survey questions. All strategies implemented and assessments given are part of normal educational practice.

The purpose of this letter is to notify you of this research and to allow you the opportunity to exclude your child's participation from my study.

If you decide you want your child's data to be in my study, you don't need to do anything at this point.

If you decide you do NOT want your child's data included in my study, please note that on this form below and return it by **9/22/17**. Note that your child will still participate in daily lessons but his/her data will not be included in my analysis.

In order to help you make an informed decision, please note the following:

- I am working with a faculty member at St. Kate's and an advisor to complete this particular project.
- I hope to implement a time saving communication tool between parents/guardians and teachers.

- I will be writing about the results that I get from this research. However, none of the writing that I do will include the name of this school, the names of any students, or any references that would make it possible to identify outcomes connected to a particular student. Other people will not know if your child is in my study.
- The final report of my study will be electronically available online at the St. Catherine University library. The goal of sharing my research study is to help other teachers who are also trying to improve their teaching.
- There is no penalty for not having your child's data involved in the study, I will simply delete his or her responses from my data set.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Kelsey Nisbet, kelsey_nisbet@bismarckschools.org. You may ask questions now, or if you have any questions later, you can ask me, or my advisor Mary Hedenstrom, mnhedenstrom@stkate.edu, who will be happy to answer them. If you have questions or concerns regarding the study, and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Kelsey Nisbet

Date

OPT OUT: Parents/Guardians, in order to exclude your child's data from the study, please sign and return by 9/22/17.

I do NOT want my child's data to be included in this study from the given number.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Cell Phone Number